

BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF
SAMUEL NEALE,
A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL
IN THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.



PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY THE TRACT ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS,
AND TO BE HAD AT THEIR DEPOSITORY,
No. 84, MULBERRY STREET.

BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

SAMUEL NEALE.

SAMUEL NEALE was born in Dublin in the year 1729. His mother died when he was about six years of age, and his father soon afterwards removing to America, left him, with a brother and two sisters, under the care and guardianship of an uncle and grandmother residing at Edenderry. These relatives brought them up carefully, gave them such schooling as the neighbourhood afforded, and tenderly watched over their morals and conduct. In a few years their grandmother died, and their uncle removed with them to Christians-town, in the county of Kildare, to an estate which, by the will of his grandfather, Samuel afterwards inherited.

Although deprived of the advantage of a religiously guarded education, Samuel was remarkably favoured with the notice of the great Preserver of men.

The following extracts are made, (with some abbreviation) from a journal of his life, kept by himself:

“In my early years, though deprived of my parents, the Lord my God was near, and took me up, and at times moved upon my spirit and melted my heart, before I well knew what it was that affected me. When very young, reading the scriptures, and other writings tending to instruct me in that which was good and profitable, I felt my spirit tendered, and enjoyed a sweetness of mind that made me very sedate and grave, and often the tears would run down my cheeks. In these seasons I felt myself very comfortable; and had a belief that I was seen by the all-wise Creator, who knew all things: but such impressions soon wore off, and the levity of my natural disposition got into dominion, when amongst my play-fellows.

“Thus I went on for some time, when I was attacked by the small-pox; it reduced me very low, and few thought I should recover. I thought I was not fit to die, and I therefore entered into covenant that if the Lord would bring me through, I would be more careful of my

words and actions than ever I had been before. I still remember some of the prospects I had when lying on that sick bed; but it pleased infinite goodness to raise me up. I was then about my twelfth year; and after this, though I often remembered my covenant, yet my natural propensity to youthful follies and amusements prevailed much, and stifled the good resolutions I had formed. I too much forgot the visitations I had been favoured with, and not being enough restrained, I took liberties in hunting, coursing and shooting, whereby I was introduced into unprofitable company.

“Thus I continued till my seventeenth year; about which time I had a sense given, that my life was very unprofitably spent. I knew but little of business, and was desirous of being placed in some line of life, by which I might be enabled, in addition to my income, to live respectably amongst men, and follow some business, so as to be kept out of idleness. When about eighteen years of age, I was placed with a merchant in Dublin, a very sensible humane man, to serve him till I should be twenty-one. In this situation I was as much, or more exposed than before: for having money of my own, I contracted acquaintance with many young people in that city, very injurious to my growth in that which was good; and being remarkably active and strong, and excelling most in a variety of bodily exercises, it made me vain, and emulation prompted me to endanger my health, by abusing the strength with which Providence had endued me for better purposes.

“In this time of servitude I got intimate with several young men in the college, I believe some of the most moral that were there, and I took liberties inconsistent with the principles in which I was educated. We sometimes frequented the play-house, and after these amusements, and I was on my return home, oh! the anxiety and remorse that covered my mind, and overwhelmed my spirit. I was then willing to covenant to be more careful in future, and avoid what now seemed so distressing; but when those seasons of diversion approached I felt my inclination arise with redoubled strength, and my passion for gratifying it, like a mountain insurmountable; so I went, like a man bereft of understanding: when all was over, I was ready to accuse myself as one

of the weakest of mortals, and to deplore my unsteadiness and want of resolution.

“ Thus I continued for a considerable part of the three years I spent in Dublin, sinning, and deploring my weakness, and commission of those things that afterwards stung like a serpent and bit like an adder. At particular times when sitting in meetings, I was sensible of the virtue of truth, and was very much brought down and humbled in my mind: my associates would cry out, ‘ This is a religious fit, come let us take a coach and go to the Park, Black-rock, or some such place, and drive it away :’ and thus the good Spirit was counteracted by those who were not subject to its government, but agents to him who rules in the children of disobedience, and keeps in bondage and darkness.

“ I remember in an afternoon meeting, a valuable friend was concerned to speak in a prophetic line, that the Lord would visit the youth, and pour forth of his spirit upon them, and raise up Samuels for himself: I thought she looked steadily towards me, and her words made a deep impression on me: but endeavours were used that same evening to eradicate these impressions, which, through weakness and frailty, were but too successful, so that I feared I should never be able to stand my ground, and was almost persuaded to give over striving. But my gracious and good Lord still followed me with his loving kindness, and at times created a hope that I might overcome the enemies of my own house: and in time, blessed be his holy name, I felt strength to resist their wiles and insinuations, but alas! I had many combats: and I well remember a remarkable dream which had a very great effect upon me. I thought the enemy of all good came and attacked me violently, that we wrestled a considerable time, and I was in great conflict; he brought me to my knees, but still could not throw me down, and after much struggling he vanished. I awoke, and my shirt was as if dipped in water from the agony of this conflict; though I was young, it made a great impression on me, and since that time I have seen my dream fulfilled. But for the interposition of the Lord’s mercies I should have been long since overthrown, and become a cast-away; great are his mercies, he still continues to be long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth to poor rebellious man: striving by his good

Spirit to draw him from sin and iniquity, and calling him as out of Egyptian darkness and bondage, to come into the glorious liberty of being his son.

“My master having occasion to pay rent to the bishop of Clogher for one of his correspondents, I was sent with the money, and addressed the bishop, not as though I was one called a quaker; he took but little notice of me; I thought he treated me rather with contempt. It stung me to think I played the coward, and was ashamed to address him as a quaker: I therefore entered into an engagement that if ever I went again, I would address him in the plain language. The season came that I was to go, and I was warned in my mind to remember my engagement. I went in some degree of fear; he was just stepping into his coach to go to the country: when I addressed him as a quaker, he very politely received me, and treated me as if I had been his equal: when I had done my business, I returned with a pleasure for this act of obedience far transcending any thing I had felt before. I thought I could leap as an hart, I felt such inward joy, satisfaction, and consolation: so that I would have the beloved youth mind their guide, and not dishonour that of God in them; for as we are faithful in a little, we shall be made rulers over more.

“I went on, between hope and fear, the remainder of my apprenticeship; my frailties often precipitating me to the verge of ruin.

“During this time I had a visitation from the Most High, by a fever and ague, which brought me very low; my former covenant appeared fresh in my remembrance, and I was now afraid to ask, because before I did not perform. I continued for some time in a low condition, until infinite Goodness restored me once more to health, to try my fidelity; but, to my shame and confusion, I ran into greater evils than ever; thus ungrateful and hardhearted, I could fully subscribe to that declaration, “The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” I seemed running the full length of my chain; my conviction and remorse were at times strong, but company and the levity of my temper quenched these convictions, and I went on towards destruction, in rebellion and disobedience against the divine Monitor, which, in boundless mercy, still followed me.

"I continued in this state until I was my own master, when, intending to pay a visit to Munster, to form acquaintances and follow some business, I prepared for my journey, equipped like a young man of the world, had a livery servant, and set forward in good spirits on my expedition.

"I pursued my journey to Limerick, where I staid some days with a relative. Here I fell into very dissipated company, old acquaintances that I had in Dublin: from thence I proceeded to Cork, and on the road felt my mind impressed with solid reflections, which I have since thought preparatory to what soon followed; for I was conscious that my weakness and frailties were great, my time running swiftly away, irresolute with respect to standing against temptation and the allurements of sin, and sin-pleasing pleasures. In this disposition I reached Cork, and there mingled with my old acquaintances, and got new ones. Being at a play one evening, up late that night, and lying pretty long next morning, which was First-day, an acquaintance asked me to go to meeting, and at the same time informed me there were strangers to be there, telling me who they were; I said I would, for at my worst state I generally attended meetings; so to meeting I went, and it was a memorable one to me; for in it my state was so opened to that highly favoured instrument, in the Lord's hand, Catherine Payton (who with Mary Peisley was visiting the churches) that all I had done seemed to have been unfolded to her in a wonderful manner. I was as one smitten to the ground, dissolved in tears, and without spirit: this was a visitation from the Most High, beyond all others that I had as yet witnessed; I was so wrought upon by the power and Spirit of the holy Jesus, that like Saul, I was ready to cry out; "Lord what wouldst thou have me to do?" I was almost ashamed to be seen, being so bedewed with tears, and slunk away, after meeting, to get into a private place. I joined company with a religious young man, and forsook my gay companions and associates, who beheld me with astonishment.

"The change was very rapid, and my doubts and fears respecting myself were very great, so that I could not trust myself in my former company, lest my innumerable frailties should prove too powerful for all my good

resolutions. So I abode still and quiet, and kept near these messengers of glad tidings to me. I went with them to Bandon and Kinsale; and the same powerful dispensation of divine virtue followed me; breaking in upon me, and tendering my spirit in a wonderful manner, in public meetings as well as in private opportunities. When I returned to Cork, I kept as private as I well could, and resolved to quit all my worldly pursuits, and follow the gentle leadings of that heavenly light that showed me the vanity of worldly glory, and that the pleasures of sin are but as for a moment.

“Our beloved friends intended for the province meeting at Limerick, and took Kilcommon meeting in their way: where they went, I went; and a considerable degree of concern grew in my mind, both by day and by night: their company was precious to me, their conduct and conversation strengthening; and the inward manifestations of heavenly goodness were my crown and rejoicing. My eyes were measurably opened to behold my insignificance, rebellion and backsliding: I saw the perverseness of my nature, and that in me, as man, dwelt no good thing; I thought I saw that if I missed the present opportunity of coming as out of Babylon, I was lost for ever; my measure was full, and if I did not embrace the present offer, ruin and destruction would be my portion.

“My hunger and thirst after righteousness were great: I delighted much in reading and retirement; worldly things had no charms for me at this season, when the new creation began to dawn: although, at times, I felt that the mount of Esau was on fire, and the consuming thereof hard to bear, yet it was necessary, in order that I might witness a new heaven and a new earth, wherein alone righteousness can dwell. I went with them to many meetings, and still heavenly good attended me, which encouraged me to persevere, and resolve to be steadfast.

“I was very comfortable in this good company, and in that of valuable friends where I came: but the time drew near, when I must be separated from them; and though it was a very heavy trial upon me to leave those friends, who as instruments, were exceedingly helpful and beneficial to me in my weak state, yet I concluded to return, and accordingly took leave of my beloved fel-

low travellers, and turned my face towards home, which was then in Dublin.

"This was about the middle of the summer of 1751, and in the twenty-second year of my age. I journeyed homeward in great heaviness; fear seized on me lest I should not be able to stand my ground amongst my intimates and acquaintances, professors and profane; being well known in that great and populous city, and having had many proofs of my own unsteadiness and forgetfulness, when heretofore favoured with the tendering sheddings of the convictions of truth on my mind. At times I had thoughts of leaving the kingdom, and residing in England, (near some valuable experienced friends) where I might be safer than amongst my acquaintances in my own country, who so often allured and drew me from the paths of purity, into the pursuit of lying vanities. Thus I reasoned with flesh and blood; but I was instructed to see that he who visited me, was able to preserve me, if I would but be subject and obedient to his wholesome instruction; and that where I had dishonoured him by my inconsistencies, there, by my fidelity to the law he writes in the heart, I might honour and confess him before men. These intimations quieted my mind, and I resolved to meet ridicule, reviling, and even persecution itself, for the sake of him, whom I was resolved to follow, as I felt strength.

"I staid in Dublin amongst my friends, attending meetings constantly, and sometimes met a select [company] at Samuel Judd's, where I was often refreshed and comforted; the Lord was pleased to be with me, contriting my spirit and humbling me under his mighty hand.

"The house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger, until it became established; so, in a religious sense, conversion is a gradual work; the sinful nature declines by the efficacy of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, which purges the floor of the heart, and makes it a fit temple for the Spirit of the Son of God to dwell in. This causes a strong combat, a severe conflict, in which the poor creature suffers deep probation and tribulation; but it is the way to virtue and glory, and is the heavenly preparer of paths to walk in acceptably to God: who, gradually carrying on his own work in the midst of suffering, visits by his

life-giving presence, to animate, cheer, and enable the drooping soul to hold on its way; and so, by this invisible and glorious work, the day of redemption draws nigh, and the poor pilgrim goes from strength to strength and from one degree of experience to another, rejoicing in the Lord Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh until the work be completed: then the poor traveller can say, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.'

"After I had spent some time in Dublin, my dear friend Garratt Van Hassen, having an inclination to go to Mountmelick, to see friends there-away in their families, I felt an inclination to accompany him, of which he seemed glad. On our return, we called at Christian's-town, and stayed a few nights there, where I met with a remarkable occurrence. I had been used in former times to walk out with my gun and dog: it was a retired way of amusing myself, in which I thought there was no harm; and reasoning after this manner, though I was very thoughtful about leading a new life, yet I now went out as formerly: I remember I shot a brace of woodcocks, and on my return home it rained, and I went to shelter myself by a stack of corn, when it struck my mind as an impropriety, thus to waste my time in this way of amusement, so I returned rather heavy-hearted: dear Garratt and I lodged together; and next morning he asked me if I was awake, I told him I was; 'I have something to say to thee,' said he; I bid him say on. 'It has been,' said he, 'as if an angel had spoken to me, to bid thee put away thy gun, and I believe it is proper that thou shouldst put away that amusement:' to this purport he spoke; and that same night I dreamed that it was said to me, intelligibly in my sleep, that if I would be a son of righteousness, I must put away my gun, and such amusements: it made a deep impression on my mind, and I concluded to give up everything of the kind and take up my daily cross, and follow the leadings of the Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world."

Samuel Neale, by submission to the operation of the Holy Spirit, grew in religious experience, and a few months afterwards was intrusted with a gift in the ministry of the Gospel. His first appearance in the ministry was at a meeting in the country.

On his return to Dublin he says: "I had much reasoning with flesh and blood, such as, what would the people think or say of such an one, who had been a gay young man, a libertine and a persecutor of the holy Jesus, in his spiritual appearance, [was I] to appear now as a preacher of righteousness.

"When the meeting day came, my fears increased, and in this state I went to meeting; it was on a First-day; there was a very large gathering, amongst whom were divers of my associates and old companions. I was concerned to bear my testimony, which I did in great fear and trembling: the subject was Paul's conversion; 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' It was spoken in great brokenness, I did not say much, but it had an extraordinary reach over the meeting; many present wept aloud, and for a considerable space of time. After meeting I endeavoured to get away unperceived, though one man, (not of our society) caught me in his arms and embraced me. Thus was I sustained and strengthened in my setting out in the work of the ministry."

Soon after this, William Brown of Pennsylvania, a minister of the Gospel in the Society of Friends, then on a religious visit, arrived in Dublin. He had no companion, and Samuel Neale feeling the way open, and having the approbation of his friends, agreed to accompany him. They travelled together through Ireland, part of England, and in Holland and Germany, to their mutual consolation. The visit tended to Samuel's establishment in the truth, and at its close he says:

"It was no small exercise to me to leave him, who was made as a father to me in counsel and advice. We had a religious sitting wherein we were mutually comforted, and had to believe, that, as the Lord our God joined us together, so in his wisdom he separated us, and in his love we parted."

In the year 1753 Samuel Neale removed to reside within the compass of Edenderry monthly meeting, where he continued faithfully to labour in the exercise of his gift as a minister of the Gospel. In 1757 he was joined in marriage to Mary Peisley, an eminently gifted servant and minister of our Lord Jesus Christ. This connection was dissolved by the death of his wife within the short space of three days, after a few hours' illness. This heavy trial he bore with much resignation to the Divine will,

manifesting the inward support which was afforded him, by the lively exercise of his gift at her interment.

In the year 1758 being in England on a religious visit, he notes in his journal the following interesting account :

“Seventh of Seventh month. I was at the quarterly meeting at Kendal. That honourable elder, James Wilson, was there; in his eighty-third year: whose living counsel, in testimony, was very refreshing, and he appeared in the strength of a young man. He told me of a meeting he was at in London, with Thomas Wilson, where was a great concourse of people, and amongst them two persons of high rank in the world, who sat very attentively while a Friend was speaking, and seemed to like what was delivered; but when Thomas stood up, being old, bald, and of a mean appearance, they despised him; and one said to the other, ‘Come, my lord, let us go, for what can this old fool say?’ ‘No,’ said the other, ‘let us stay, for this is Jeremiah the Prophet, let us hear him:’ so, as Thomas went on, the life arose, and the power got into dominion, which tendered one of them in a very remarkable manner; the tears flowed in great plenty from his eyes, which he strove, in vain, to hide. After Thomas had sat down, he stood up, and desired he might be forgiven of Thomas, and of the Almighty.”

In the year 1760, he removed to the city of Cork, where he resided during the remainder of his life.

Having for several years felt a weighty concern to pay a religious visit to the meetings of Friends in North America, with the full unity and concurrence of his brethren, he embarked in the Eighth Month, 1770; and was enabled to visit the meetings generally on that continent, to the consolation and strengthening of many, and to the peace of his own mind. He returned in the Eleventh month, 1772, and, at a suitable season, with great brokenness of spirit, gave a diffident, tendering account of the said visit, ascribing all praise to that power which had qualified and sent forth, and so marvellously to him, conducted through the various probations attendant on such a service.

He was often engaged in visiting Friends in sundry parts of Ireland; was several times in England and Wales; and once in Scotland on the same account.

While favoured with health, he was exemplary in the attendance of particular and general meetings, and divers times attended the yearly meeting in London. Thus he continued, occupying with his gift at home and abroad, until increasing age and infirmities of body became some impediment to his labours in that line.

His last journey was on a visit to Friends in the province of Leinster. In this service he appeared replenished with the love and tenderness of the Gospel, steadily moving under the cover of it, and bringing forth the fruits of charity, patience and meekness of wisdom.

On returning home he found himself still more indisposed, and was unable to attend meetings much afterwards. In a short time he was affected with a mortification in his foot which soon proved fatal. During his illness he was visited by Mary Dudley, a ministering friend, who was then engaged in religious labours in the families of Friends in the city of Cork. She thus describes her visit: "Some settings have been graciously owned, but I know not any so much so, with the sensible gathering of that manna which falls from the heavenly treasury, as one this morning in the dwelling of that prince in Israel, Samuel Neale, whose outward man is visibly decaying, while the inward man is renewed day by day. It was truly encouraging and strengthening to hear this father in the church declare, that he had not flinched from whatever had been required of him, but had done it with all his might, and that through Divine mercy, he now found support in the midst of infirmities, 'therefore,' he added, 'be faithful, follow the Lord fully, and give up to every manifestation of His will.'"

He was preserved meek, humble and patient to the end, quietly departing this life the 27th of Second month 1792, aged 62 years, a minister 40 years. We doubt not he is entered into the joy of his Lord, and into his Master's rest.